



**SPEECH**

**BY**

**MR. JAMES A. MICHEL  
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**AT THE**

**TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN  
DEVELOPMENT IV (TICAD IV) SUMMIT-LEVEL MEETING**

**YOKOHAMA, JAPAN**

**THEME OF MEETING:**

***“TOWARDS A VIBRANT AFRICA – CONTINENT OF HOPE AND  
OPPORTUNITY”***

**DELIVERED**

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**TOPIC OF SESSION:**

***“ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES/CLIMATE CHANGE”***

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I should like to thank most sincerely the Government of Japan for its hospitality and for the significant role it continues to play in promoting Africa's development, and for hosting the TICAD IV Summit-level Meeting.

The Government of Japan, through TICAD, has been instrumental in mobilizing international support for our continent, and more importantly, in assisting us in our endeavour to enhance ownership of our development programmes. This collaboration has indeed brought Japan and Africa much closer, despite our geographical distances.

Since its initiation by Japan in 1993 the TICAD process, has achieved some important milestones. One of the landmark achievements is that TICAD has been active in enhancing development cooperation between Africa and the international community, particularly in areas of human resource development, socio economic infrastructure, and ensuring "human security" through assistance to achieve MDGs.

However there is a need to make TICAD more relevant to the future. This would enable Japan to further assist us to tackle the emerging challenges, particularly in the areas of trade and investment, environment and climate change and the continuing marginalization of Africa in the global economy.

Our priorities are many. One of these is climate change. Our struggle to limit its extent and effects requires collective global effort and political commitment. Climate change is real, and we can observe its effects in different ways in different areas of the globe. For those regions where economic and environmental systems are already under stress, it is to be expected that the extra burden of climate change will cause further instability – an instability that will reach far beyond the boundaries of those regions and affect each and every one of us.

Climate change is taking its toll and its effects are evident. Drought, erosion and floods are affecting harvests. These, coupled with the quest for biofuels, are forcing food prices beyond the reach of millions.

Small island states remain particularly vulnerable to the threat of climate change. It is with this in mind that in September 2007 I launched the Sea Level Rise Foundation to coincide with the UN Secretary General's High Level Event on Climate Change. The Sea Level Rise Foundation is a global platform of excellence on adaptation to sea level rise and under the guidance of a team of global leaders we are ready to bring about this programme of action on climate change.

The mechanism is aimed at galvanizing global action to address the devastating impacts of climate change on our planet, and to bring together support for small island states, islands and other low-lying areas in adapting to sea-level rise. I am confident that you will all support the Sea Level Rise Foundation and provide this additional catalyst to bring together knowledge, technologies and resources to address this urgent and crucial issue.

We join many others from around the planet who are seeking to mitigate the effects of climate change and place the issue at the heart of the agenda of multilateral fora. We look to Japan as one of the key partners to continue this common effort. I warmly welcome Japan's recent initiative to launch the "Cool Earth Partnership" programme which will allocate grants to poor income countries to tackle adaptation, and gain access to clean energy, as well as facilitate funds to address mitigation.

Through the TICAD process, our countries must remain a strong voice in the global combat against climate change and environmental degradation. The people of Seychelles are committed to this challenge. Today, we stand in solidarity with all like-minded nations and convey our determination and optimism in the battle to protect our environment, which is indeed our future. We cannot afford to procrastinate!

*Mr. Chairman,*

*President Museveni spoke earlier this morning of value addition in very stark terms. It reminds me of my country's situation- not in terms of coffee (we don't grow coffee); but in terms of our blue gold. Our tuna! 380,000 tons of tuna are caught in our EEZ every year and exported. Total income derived from this- accruing principally from licensing and transshipment fees mostly from EU countries- amount to less than EURO 15 million; when the real value of the raw, unprocessed fish on the world market is EURO 3.8 billion! Where I ask you, is the fairness in the system? Where are the benefits of free trade? Here, we are, talking of gross injustice! And this injustice is one of the underlying causes of under-development. And unless we rectify it, prosperity will continue to elude us.*

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by underlining the fact that we have high expectations from this TICAD IV Summit. It is our hope that the deliberations of this Meeting will lay the fundamentals that will enable Africa's voice to be heard. The successful and timely attainment of the overarching objective of sustained and accelerated development in Africa will no doubt require the commitment and engagement of the international community as a whole. We therefore welcome the Government of Japan's intention, as the G8 Chair, to reflect the outcomes of TICAD IV to the discussions in the upcoming G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

Thank you.